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ELK GROVE MAN CHARGED WITH POSSESSING VISUAL DEPICTIONS OF MINORS ENGAGED IN SEXUALLY EXPLICIT CONDUCT

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that MICHAEL WILLIAMS, 39, of Elk Grove, was indicted on charges he possessed, received and transported visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. The four-count indictment was returned today by a federal grand jury and also seeks the forfeiture of the computer equipment WILLIAMS used to commit the alleged offenses.

According to a criminal complaint filed with the court last week, WILLIAMS came to the attention of law enforcement because a screen name used by him had accessed a Yahoo! user group in which group members discussed having sex with their children and about sharing children for sexual purposes. When WILLIAMS' computer was analyzed by law enforcement, agents found numerous images depicting minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. Among the images of child pornography were depictions of identified victims of child sexual abuse. WILLIAMS used a file sharing program called E-Mule to download his child pornography by entering key words and an age range. According to the indictment, WILLIAMS also used a program called Hello.com to transport child pornography.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Laurel D. White, who is prosecuting the case, if convicted, WILLIAMS faces a possible 10-year term of imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and a possible life term of supervised release for the possession charge. The receipt and transportation charges each carry a 5-year mandatory minimum, to 20-year maximum term of imprisonment, a possible \$250,000 fine, and possible life term of supervised release. However, the actual sentence will be dictated by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of factors, and will be imposed at the discretion of the court.

The indictment of WILLIAMS is the product of Operation Valley Predator, a three-day multi-agency operation spearheaded by the Sacramento Office of the FBI and the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California as part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC), a national initiative of the United States Department of Justice, designed to increase federal and state prosecutions of violent sexual predators of children. As a part of PSC, the United States Attorney's Office in both Sacramento and Fresno, has teamed with state and local agencies throughout the Eastern District to enhance law enforcement presence on the Internet, and to

educate the public and children of safe internet use. For additional information on the PSC initiative, please go to www.projectsafechildhood.gov, or call the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California and ask to speak with the PSC coordinator.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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